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COMMITTEE APPROVES BILL TO REQUIRE PUBLIC MEETINGS ON UC EXECUTIVE PAY



YEE'S BILL WOULD REQUIRE PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ON EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION BY UC REGENTS

A bill requiring public meetings for all discussions regarding executive compensation at the University of California (UC) was recently approved on a bipartisan 8-1 vote in the State Senate Committee on Education.

Speaker pro Tem Yee introduced AB 775 following audits, a lawsuit and other revelations determined that the UC failed to obtain public approval from the Board of Regents for compensation packages and that some top UC executives were compensated over and above what had been revealed to the public.

"For too long the UC has been acting in secrecy when it

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DEMOCRATS PROTECT TOP PRIORITIES IN BUDGET DEAL



YEE TOUTS INVESTMENT IN K-12, HIGHER ED, PARKS, FOSTER CARE, AND HEALTH SERVICES

Speaker pro Tem Yee proclaimed victory for the environment, schools, foster children and low and middle income Californians, with the passage of the state budget. The \$131 billion state budget passed the two-thirds requirement three days before the new fiscal year, a legislative feat that hadn't been reached since 2000.

"We passed a responsible, compassionate, and balanced budget that fully funds our schools, lowers college tuition, invests in foster care, and increases services for the disabled and low-income families," said Yee. "This is a fiscally sound budget that protects Democrats top priorities – our children, healthcare, and the environment."

One of the highlights of the budget for Democrats is paying for the Governor's "broken promise," the \$2 billion to schools that goes above the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee.

The budget also includes: increased funding for K-12 that provides for more local control; the biggest increase in Economic Impact Aid funding for low-income children and English language learners in a generation; investment to help high school seniors pass the exit exam; and major new investment for English-language learners—professional development and long-term research into best practices.

"As a child psychologist, I understand the importance of

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comes to determining high-level salaries,” said Yee. “This legislation will finally bring sunshine to these discussions, give members of the media the access they deserve and restore the public’s trust. This bill simply makes the UC live up to its own motto, *Fiat lux*, Latin for Let There Be Light.”

Unlike every other public entity, UC has been holding several closed committee meetings to discuss and act upon top executives’ compensation.

In November 2005, it was reported that the university paid some top employees more than what was reported to the public. Over the past few months, audits also found that the university failed to even get approval from the Regents for a number of compensation packages.

“Unfortunately, an extraordinary number of compensation packages have been approved in secret and in complete violation of UC policy, without any input from taxpayers or students,” said Yee. “It is imperative that we enact this open government law immediately.”

AB 775 is supported by the California Newspaper Publishers Association, Council of UC Faculty Associations, UC Student Association, AFSCME, California Labor Federation, California Nurses Association, and others. The only opposition filed is from the UC itself.

COMMITTEE APPROVES BILL TO CONSIDER ANIMALS IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

BILL MAY SAVE LIVES OF PEOPLE, PETS, AND LIVESTOCK

The most common reason for unauthorized reentry into a disaster area is people attempting to rescue their pets. Similarly, one of the greatest hindrances to efficient evacuations is the reluctance of evacuees to abandon their pets. As a result, rescue and relief efforts are slowed and emergency personnel and disaster victims are put at further risk.

At present, California disaster planning law does not require consideration of household pets, service animals, equines, and livestock. Speaker pro Tem Yee has introduced legislation to require state and local agencies to implement a standardized emergency management system (SEMS) that considers animals following a major disaster or emergency.

AB 450, which unanimously passed the State Senate Governmental Organization Committee, specifically requires the Office of Emergency Services, in coordination with all designated emergency agencies, to take into account the needs of service animals, livestock, equines and individuals with household pets.

“In California, we have the ever-present threat of fire, flood, and earthquake,” said Yee. “It is important that we consider animals in our disaster planning as they play a critical role in our lives and our economy. It is imperative that the blind have their service dogs, that our livestock industry continues, and that people are not put in harms way trying to save their family pets.”

YEE'S SALON SAFETY BILL SPURS NEW REGULATIONS

***DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES
RECOMMENDATIONS, COMMITMENT TO LEGISLATION***

Speaker pro Tem Yee commended Department of Consumer Affairs Director Charlene Zettel today after she unveiled a list of recommendations aimed at protecting California consumers from unsanitary nail salons.

The recommendations come as a result of the Working Group on Footspa Safety that was created last year by Governor Schwarzenegger after vetoing a bill by Yee to clean up unsanitary salons and provide consumers with a notice if a salon had failed inspection.

“I am encouraged by the work of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Working Group,” said Yee. “These new recommendations combined with new Legislation will help ensure the protection of nail salons consumers.”

The Working Group on Footspa Safety’s recommendations include: a new set of footspa cleaning requirements; increasing fines to \$500 per footspa chair or cleaning log for a maximum of \$5,000 per inspection; allowing the Board of Barbering and Cosmetology to put a licensee on probation for up to a year if found in violation of health and safety laws; and requiring remedial training in footspa cleaning for those who violate cleaning requirements.

Some of the group’s recommendations, such as heavier fines for salons that fail to follow state rules for cleaning footspas, have already been implemented. Others will be realized through the regulatory process, while still others will require new legislation to be authored by Yee later this session.

There has been a dramatic rise in the number of people complaining of persistent lesions and infections after visiting nail salons. California has been especially hard hit by the outbreak, with hundreds of women reporting cases of a rare bacterial infection linked to pedicures and manicures.

In 1999 and 2000, there was an outbreak of infection from a salon in Watsonville, California, that caused mycobacterial infections in over 100 women. The outbreak was due specifically to the lack of cleaning the pedicure equipment properly. In November 2004, another outbreak occurred in San Jose that had people complaining about leg lesions and infections. The assessment is that 27 salons were involved with over 120 people infected. Complications from one such infection are suspected to have led to a recent death.

In February, doctors determined that another woman in Fort Worth, Texas died as a result of a staph infection caused by bacteria from a nail salon.

“Either salons are doing the right thing or they are not,” said Yee. “Those who are failing to use the proper disinfectants and cleaning mechanisms are not innocent businesses, but are irresponsible salons risking the health of consumers and an entire industry.”

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EDUCATION COMMITTEE VOTES TO PROTECT SPEECH FOR COLLEGE NEWS *FIRST-IN-THE-NATION LEGISLATION WILL PROHIBIT CENSORSHIP OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY NEWSPAPERS*

The State Senate Education Committee has unanimously approved legislation authored by Speaker pro Tem Yee to protect freedom of speech and press for college and university newspapers. AB 2581, which passed on a bipartisan 8-0 vote, is the nation's first bill specifically prohibiting censorship of college student newspapers.

"College journalists deserve the same protections as any other journalist," said Yee. "Having true freedom of the press is essential on college campuses and it is a fundamental part of a young journalists training for real world reporting. Allowing a school administration to censor is contrary to the democratic process and the ability of a student newspaper to serve as the watchdog and bring sunshine to the actions of school administrators."

A recent U.S. Seventh Circuit Court decision ruled that a college administrator could require student editors of a state university's newspaper to submit articles for prior review before the newspaper would be sent to the printer for publication.

The case known as *Hosty v. Carter* involved two editors and a reporter at the *Innovator*, a student newspaper at Governor's State University in Illinois. The newspaper published a series of articles critical of the school's administration, including one about the decision not to renew the contract of the *Innovator's* advisor. Subsequently, the dean of student affairs instituted a requirement that the newspaper had to submit articles to the administration for approval prior to publication.

The District Court first ruled that the students' First Amendment rights were violated, but the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals reverse the lower court decision and recently the US Supreme Court declined to hear the students' appeal. Prior to this decision, it was assumed in California that student publications had the same First Amendment protections as professional publications.

In fact, the Seventh District decision spurred Christine Helwick, General Counsel for the California State University system, to send a memo to presidents at each CSU campus that read, "The [*Hosty*]' case appears to signal that CSU campuses may have more latitude than previously believed to censor the content of subsidized student newspapers."

Ironically, a state law written in 1992 provided censorship protection for high school publications. AB 2581 would ensure such free speech protections for college publications, specifically prohibiting censorship of student newspapers at any UC, CSU, or community college. The bill would also prohibit any college, university or community college officials from disciplining a student who engages in speech or press activities.

"Without AB 2581, all California student publications are at risk of censorship," said Yee. "It is imperative that we swiftly pass this bill and the Governor signs it into law." ❖

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investing in our children and I believe this budget demonstrates that our number one concern is the educational system," said Yee. "Not only were we able to pass a budget on time for the first time in six years, we approved one of the largest increases ever for our schools."

Higher education budget highlights include: full funding for enrollment growth; decrease in community college fees from \$26/unit to \$20/unit; no fee increases in UC and CSU tuition; full funding for academic preparation programs at UC and CSU; increase and permanent funding for the UC labor institutes; and full funding for community college equalization.

In terms of Health and Human Services: \$100 million investment in CalWORKs to get more people working, backfill for loss of federal funds that mitigates potential new federal sanctions; largest investment in foster care services in years, including big improvement in the caseworker ratios to improve direct interactions with foster care youth; major increases in funding for developmental services, particularly for employment services for persons with disabilities; major investment to increase income levels for subsidized child care eligibility (income levels frozen since 2000), to avoid parents staying in low paying jobs in order to keep their subsidized child care; permanent, ongoing (and increased) funding for Prop. 36 drug treatment.

Transportation: full funding for Prop. 42; significant payback of previous Prop. 42 loans; and rejection of Governor's "rip-off" of public transit funds.

Local Government: major payback of mandates; additional funding for law enforcement programs.

Natural Resources: full funding for all existing programs; \$250 million to begin addressing backlog of deferred maintenance projects in state parks; major investment in ongoing parks maintenance and operations.

Fiscal Responsibility: more than \$3 billion in debt pay-down.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE BUDGET DETAILS](#)

JOIN
THE WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN!
STATEWIDE EFFORT OF MEN SPEAKING OUT
AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**[CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE PLEDGE AND HELP
PUT AN END TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN](#)**



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OP-ED

San Mateo County
Times

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Preserving a California Tradition

BY SPEAKER PRO TEM LELAND YEE

With the precipitous decline of horse racing in California, thousands of jobs related to the racing, breeding and care of horses have been disappearing from our state, undermining California's economy and our important agricultural traditions. In just six years, the number of licensed horse owners in California has decreased by over 24 percent.

Other states continue to lure horse owners, jockeys, trainers, and breeders out of California with larger purses, enriched from revenues from alternative forms of gaming such as slot machines. In addition, the expansive casino gaming industry in California has put horse wagering at a severe disadvantage. As a result, we not only have a declining industry but are facing a significant loss in state and local revenue, jobs, and a long-standing tradition.

Clearly, we need to reinvigorate the horse racing industry in California. It is a vital agricultural business and a part of our state's rich history that should be preserved, but unlike others states, we must do it without expanding gambling. Time and time again, the voters and the Legislature have said "no" when it comes to adding slot machines at race tracks.

It is with these considerations - and the recognition that this historic industry currently contributes \$4.1 billion in direct economic benefit and employs approximately 52,000 Californians annually - that I introduced legislation that will provide horseracing enthusiasts an opportunity to place bets on additional races.

Assembly Bill 2409 is designed to revive the horse racing industry, not by expanding gambling or allowing slot machines, but by using the same betting mechanism that currently exists at racetracks to conduct pari-mutuel wagering on past, historical horse races. Despite what others who have their own vested interests may say, this is simply horse racing and nothing else. In effect, we would simply be increasing the number of races at the track by taking advantage of new technology that will allow wagering on yesterday's races today.

The dynamic concept, referred to as "Instant Horseracing," allows wagering on 250,000 historical horse races, spanning 30 years of racing history. The consumer California

has access to the original handicapping information and, after placing a wager, could watch the original race on the machine. This is not very different from placing a bet at Bay Meadows on a horse that is racing at Hollywood Park.

Specifically, AB 2409 authorizes Instant Horseracing in California, limits its operation to seven locations - all currently operating horse racing tracks, caps the number of Instant Horseracing devices per location, and requires the California Horseracing Board to regulate all aspects of Instant Horseracing.

One such location is our Bay Meadows racetrack in San Mateo, which is currently facing a vigorous debate on its future. Regardless of the outcome of the development project, we need to make the track viable in the short term. Conservative estimates indicate that AB 2409 could bring in \$3 million in new, much needed revenue for the City of San Mateo. If the development project moves forward smoothly, we still should have a track that is not losing money in the few years ahead. If the development does not move forward and the voters of San Mateo say they want to save the track, then this proposal could make the track viable in the long term as well.

AB 2409 has already gained the support of the California Federation of Labor, Teamsters Union, California Thoroughbred Breeders Association, Thoroughbred Owners of California, California Thoroughbred Trainers, Jockeys Guild, Hollywood Park Racetrack, Bay Meadows Racecourse, Fairplex Park - Los Angeles County Fair, Santa Anita Park, Golden Gate Fields, Los Alamitos Racecourse, Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, and the Oak Tree Racing Association, among others.

We have an industry working together on an idea that can be achieved, and we have brought competing interests in San Mateo together - both the racetrack group who want to develop the track and the folks trying to preserve it - in an effort to revitalize an important California pastime and maintain a vital industry in our state.

This proposal deserves a chance. Together, we will not only bring in much needed revenue for our community, but we can help save an exciting tradition in

